

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 FEA-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05
OES-06 ERDA-05 CU-02 MCT-01 A-01 OPR-02 SAB-02
COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SY-05 USSS-00 OC-06 CCO-00
/130 W

-----021405Z 034468 /45

P R 012134Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 796
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM
AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, PARM, ELAB, CO
SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. FALSE RUMORS OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ' RESIGNATION
SURFACED IN THE LOCAL NEWS MEDIA THIS WEEK. INCREASED
VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY INVOLVING STUDENTS, ADDED TO THE
UNSETTLED ATMOSPHERE. AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND LINOWITZ, US-
ILO REPRESENTATIVE HOROWITZ, AND A SOUTH KOREAN SPECIAL ENVOY
COMPLETED SUCCESSFUL, SEPARATE VISITS; AND THE GOC AFFIRMED
ITS INTENTION TO EXTEND TWO NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENTS.
END SUMMARY.

2. CORRUPTION CHARGES PROMPT PRESIDENTIAL RESIGNATION RUMORS.
ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION INVOLVING TWO OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ'
SONS AND THE PRESIDENT'S OVERREACTION TO THESE CHARGES
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WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR A SPATE OF RUMORS AND SOME
PRESS STORIES THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD RESIGNED, OR THAT
A MILITARY COUP WAS IN THE OFFING (SEE BOGOTA 2968).
RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCES CATEGORICALLY DENIED THESE REPORTS,
ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE IN CHARACTER FOR LOPEZ, IN AN OUTBURST
PROMPTED BY PIQUE OR VEXATION, TO THREATEN RESIGNATION,
WITH NO INTENTION OF DOING SO. LOPEZ' IRRITATION OVER

THE CHARGES LED HIM TO CALL IN THE EDITOR OF EL TIEMPO, WHO IN TURN TRIED TO PREVAIL ON A BITTER ANTI-LOPEZ CRITIC, THE WIDELY READ COLUMNIST KLIM, TO DESIST FROM HIS ATTACKS, CITING AMONG OTHER DANGERS THE IMMINENCE OF A MILITARY COUP. KLIM AND TWO OF HIS BROTHERS, ALSO EL TIEMPO COLUMNISTS, RESIGNED FROM THE PAPER IN PROTEST, THE ENTIRE EPISODE RECEIVING CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY IN ALL MEDIA. A PECULIAR HISTORICAL PARALLEL MAY HAVE ADDED VERISIMILITUDE TO THE RESIGNATION RUMORS; LOPEZ' FATHER, LOPEZ PUMAREJO, RESIGNED FROM OFFICE IN 1945 DURING HIS SECOND PRESIDENCY ADMIDST ALLEGATIONS OF SCANDAL WHICH INVOLVED HIS SON, THE PRESENT PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS SUPPORTERS REPORTEDLY ARE NOW PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THESE CHARGES AS PART OF WHAT IS LIKELY TO BECOME A PARTICULARLY ROUGH POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IN WHICH LOPEZ, HIS FAMILY, AND HIS ADMINISTRATION WILL BE M PRIME TARGETS. SOME OF LOPEZ' SUPPORTERS APPEAR TO BE PREPARING COUNTERATTACKS IN KIND, IN WHICH ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION WILL BE LEVIED AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE OSPINA-PASTRANA WING OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, WHOSE CHARGES AGAINST LOPEZ' SONS PROVIDED THE ORIGINAL BASIS FOR THE RESIGNATION RUMORS.

3. INTERNAL DISORDERS CONTINUE.

ROVING BANDS OF YOUTHS, MOSTLY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, MADE DRIVING PARTICULARLY HAZARDOUS THIS WEEK IN BOGOTA AS THEY BURNED AT LEAST SEVEN CARS AND STONED OTHERS IN INCIDENTS PRIMARILY PROTESTING LAST WEEK'S CLOSING OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. MOST OF THE DESTROYED VEHICLES WERE REGISTERED TO COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, BUT ONE AUTOMOBILE WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEING DRIVEN BY A COLOMBIAN CONNECTED WITH THE US TECHNICAL AID MISSION, AND THE WIFE OF A US MILGROUP OFFICER NARROWLY ESCAPED INJURY AS HER CAR WAS ATTACKED BY A GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS. THESE INCIDENTS WERE A CONTINUATION OF STUDENT ATTACKS WHICH BEGAN THE PREVIOUS WEEK IN WHICH ONE DRIVER WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED AND THE BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR SUFFERED SLIGHT CUTS WHEN HIS CAR WINDOWS WERE SHATTERED BY STUDENTS NEAR THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. ALSO THIS WEEK IN BOTOTA, A WEALTH PANAMANIAN BUSINESSMAN WAS KIDNAPPED AND BOMBS CAUSED MINOR DAMAGE TO THE AVIANCA AIRLINE OFFICE AND TO A SEARS STORE. IN THE VIOLENCE-PLAGUED TOWN OF CIMITARRA IN SANTADNDER DEPARTMENT, THREE LIBERAL PARTY POLITICIANS WERE FOJND MURDERED, PRESUMABLY BY MEMBERS OF THE FOURTH FRONT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC), WHICH OPERATES IN THE AREA.

4. AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND LINOWITZ BRIEF COLOMBIANS.

AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND LINOWITZ COMPLETED A SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO COLOMBIA DURING WHICH THEY BRIEFED PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND

FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO ON THE US POSITION IN THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS. THEIR VISIT RECEIVED ONLY MODERATE COVERAGE IN THE LOCAL NEWS MEDIA. BESIDES TELEVISION AND PRESS COVERAGE OF THEIR AIRPORT ARRIVAL AND THEIR MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, TEXTUAL REPORTING OF THE VISIT WAS LIMITED TO AN EXPLANATION OF THE TRIP'S PURPOSE WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT.

5. HOROWITZ VISIT ELICITS GOC SUPPORT ON ILO MATTERS. A BRIEF VISIT BY USG REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) DANIEL L. HOROWITZ, BROUGHT FORTH STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT BY TOP OFFICIALS OF THE COLOMBIAN MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND LABOR FOR US POSITIONS RELATING TO THE ILO. THIS REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT POLICY SHIFT FROM THE GOC'S FORMER NEUTRAL STANCE ON MANY ILO MATTERS. (BOGOTA 3042).

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6. SOUTH KOREAN SPECIAL ENVOY CONCLUDES OFFICIAL VISIT. FORMER ROK PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG-PIL VISITED COLOMBIA AS PART OF HIS SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR (EEE BOGOTA 3041). KIM HELD A SATISFACTORY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO AND OTHER HIGH GOC OFFICIALS WHOM HE THANKED FOR GOC SUPPORT DURING THE KOREAN WAR AND IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. THE ROK ENVOY IN RETURN RECEIVED THE GOC'S REASSURANCE OF ITS INTENTION TO OPEN AN EMBASSY IN SEOUL AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

7. US AND COLOMBIA EXCHANGE NOTES TO EXTEND NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS. THE AMBASSADOR AND THE COLOMBIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS EXCHANGED NOTES ON MARCH 28 TO EXTEND THE NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS AND GUARANTEES CONTAINED IN THE BILATERAL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WHICH EXPIRED ON THAT DATE. THE TRILATERAL SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE US, COLOMBIA, AND THE IAEA WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY EXTENDED THROUGH A TRILATERAL PROTOCOL SIGNED IN VIENNA ALSO ON MARCH 28. SANCHEZ

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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